

representation of how we think the funds should be spent. Obviously, those of you who have been here before know that we get into some arguments here on the floor as to how those funds should be spent after we make our decision. I can tell you that we get into arguments within the committee as to what the proper priorities are, and there is good reason for that. The reasons, basically, are that we have before us right now hundreds of millions of dollars in requests that are over and above the amounts of funds that we have to spend. This bill, 683, is one of those. This is 4.5 million of the hundreds of millions of requests that we have over and above our current appropriation level. So we are trying and we are currently starting our third go-around of the budget, and now we are going to try to put together a package that we think is sustainable and meets the priorities of the state. This bill, 683, will be among those priorities. I don't think it is going to have a high priority in my mind but it may have a high priority in some of the committee members' minds. As a matter of fact, I think we have four members of the committee that are on the bill as co-sponsors. However, the point is, this is one piece of the puzzle, this is one area of appropriations that ought to rightfully fight for its level in committee with the other requests, whether they be requests from the Department of Social Services, whether it be requests from the Department of Corrections, whether it be from the Department of Economic Development, whether it be the bills that have been brought before us for state aid to schools, whether it be a myriad of issues. It ought to be a part of the process. I am opposed to pulling it out of that process and having it be on the floor separately. I realize there are many members of the floor that are on this bill, and if all of them think that, it is probably going to come out of committee. I hope it doesn't happen. I see some real problems with the bill itself, some of them that Senator Wehrbein has already enumerated, and some that Senator Warner has. What is it doing? It is general aid to municipalities is exactly what the bill does. We already have aid to municipalities. If the Legislature feels that we need to do this, we can simply increase state aid to municipalities. Sure, it is more general than this bill because this bill is geared towards infrastructure, but let me remind you that infrastructure in this context can say just about anything you want. It could be tourism. It could be the downtown development. It could be economic development things. It doesn't have to be sewer treatment, it doesn't have to be wastewater treatment. It can be a lot of things, so we have the